

Amendments to the Claims:

1.-20. (canceled)

21. (currently amended) A system for process interfacing within an automation scenario for distributed engineering systems, the system comprising:

a server for providing at least one application required for engineering;

a first client for:

directly accessing process and control data on automation devices, wherein the first client is a programming device,

using the application provided by the server remotely via the first client by a user, and

setting up an online communication channel maintained for any length of time between the first client and the server;

first mechanisms in the server for feeding data of the automation devices into the server via the communication channel; and

second mechanisms in the first client for linking the applications to the automation devices, wherein

the first mechanisms have a first interface to a current communication channel and a second interface to the applications, and wherein

the first mechanisms are provided for communicating with the second mechanisms via the communication channel;

wherein the first mechanisms comprise software that establishes a virtual process interface between a second client and the automation devices, and the virtual process interface provides real-time online access from the second client to the automation devices via the communication channel by means of tunneling of data packets.

22. (previously presented) The system according to Claim 21, wherein the first client is a thin client.

23. (previously presented) The system according to Claim 21, wherein the server is designed as a terminal server for use simultaneously by one or more participants.

24. (previously presented) The system according to Claim 23, wherein the communication channel is designed as a Remote Desktop Protocol for transmitting data to one or more participants in real time via one or more separate virtual channels.

25. (previously presented) The system according to Claim 24, wherein the first mechanisms are provided for feeding data of further automation devices into the server via the communication channel via connection of the further automation devices to the second client.

26. (previously presented) The system according to Claim 25, wherein a transmission of data in the communication channel is provided via an Intranet and/or an Internet.

27. (previously presented) The system according to Claim 25, wherein a transmission of data from the clients is provided using a Remote Desktop Protocol via a Wireless LAN.

28. (previously presented) The system according to Claim 25, wherein a transmission of data using a Remote Desktop Protocol is provided from further data sources present in the system using HTTP and/or FTP.

29. (previously presented) The system according to Claim 25, wherein the system is provided for use across different sites.

30. (currently amended) A method for process interfacing within an automation scenario for distributed engineering systems, the method comprising:

- providing an application required for engineering by a server;
- accessing automation devices that supply process data ~~via~~ directly to a first client;
- setting up an online communication channel between the first client and the server;
- feeding the data of the automation devices into the server via the communication channel;
- linking the applications to the automation devices, wherein

communication takes place with a second mechanism in the first client via the communication channel via a first mechanism in the server having a first interface to a current communication channel and a second interface to the applications, wherein data of further automation devices is fed by the first mechanism into the server via the communication channel via at least one further client and the first mechanism feeds data of further automation devices into the server over the communication channel via at least one further client and enabling the accessing of automation devices connected to the first client and the further client from any client within the system by routing in the server making a virtual peer-2-peer communication for ~~direct~~ real-time communication between the participating clients to access and configure one client system from another client system; and

- using at least one of the clients as a programming device by a user.

31. (canceled)

32. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 30, wherein one or more participants can use the server simultaneously.

33. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 30, wherein a Remote Desktop Protocol for transmitting data to one or more participants in real-time via one or more separate virtual channels is used as the communication channel.

34. (canceled)

35. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 33, wherein data is transmitted in the communication channel over an intranet and/or the Internet.

36. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 33, wherein data is transmitted from the client using the Remote Desktop Protocol via a Wireless LAN.

37. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 30, wherein data using a Remote Desktop Protocol from further data sources present in the system is transmitted employing HTTP and/or FTP.

38. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 37, wherein the system is used across different sites.

39-40. (canceled)

41. (previously presented) The method according to claim 30, wherein the client is a thin client.

42. (previously presented) The method according to claim 41, wherein the thin client depends primarily on the server for processing activities, and mainly focuses on conveying input and output between a user and the server.